# NIGERIA'S INTERNAL SECURITY DILEMMA: THE CASE OF BOKO HARAM

By

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**ABSTRACT**
There is a growing consensus that terrorism/terrorist activities have taken root in the northern part of Nigeria. The incessant bombings, maiming and sporadic killings of innocent lives, perpetrated by a religious sect Boko Haram–(*which means western education is evil*) has put the security agencies in a precarious situation. Religious differences in the world have often been used for "stereotyping and demolishing opponents," which has provided a "legitimate framework for violence that would otherwise be considered unacceptable". Recent occurrence in northern Nigeria clearly shows that the state of insecurity in the north has assumed a frightening dimension, as the ideology of the Muslim fanatics is set to Islamize the north. This paper seeks to evaluate the challenges faced by Nigeria internal security agencies against the sect and the continued hostility against Christians in the north. The question often asked is "*is holy war or Jihad imminent in Nigeria*"? A brief historical trajectory in a tabulated form was cited as a way of narrating and describing the situation. While it may be posited that insecurity is a global problem, what looks rather strange in the Nigeria situation is the seeming inability of the government to tackle the challenges head-long. The paper submits that there is an ample need to reposition internal security in Nigeria and Africa in general, taking into cognizance the need for effective policing of the nations' borders. It also advocated for administrative policies; with regards to Nigerian immigration laws, to curb illegal entry.

**Key Words:** *Internal Security, Terrorism, Jihad, Religion.*

**INTRODUCTION**

One of the principal relics of colonial rule is the demarcation or creation of borders. In the efforts of Europeans to scramble for control over the people and resources of Africa, these borders were made without any regard for the social and cultural realities of the indigenous people and as a result, some ethnic groups like *Nzema and Bono (*Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire)*, Ewe (*Ghana and Togo)*, Yuroba* (Nigeria and Benin)*, Hausa* (Nigeria, Niger and Mali) *Mende* (Liberia and Sierra Leone) among others, were divided and found themselves in different countries. Adepoju (1998:19) posited that "the ethnic groups in the adjacent countries regarded movements across these artificial boundaries as part of their internal movements, because they keep their kinship ties in spite of the boundaries created". Their cultural affinity facilitated movement across these borders and integration, especially where they dress and speak the language(s) of the indigenous people in the host community.

Nigerian population according to the 2006 census was 140 million (www. nigeriamasterweb. com/Nigeria06Census), she is Africa's largest country. Its population is of a notable diversity. The census did reveal that North-West has a total of 35,786,944, the North-East with a total of 18,971,965 representing 13.55%, while the North-Central comprise of a total number of 18,841,056 representing 13.46%. In addition, the three major ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, represented more than half of the population in Nigeria, while there are between 250 and 400 ethnic groups, depending on the criteria used, speaking some 500 indigenous languages (Aluaigba, 2009). Many of these groups had no meaningful relationship with one another before being regrouped into a colony by the British government in 1914. Existing pre-colonial relationships were marked with tension in some areas, notably in the Nigeria's central Middle Belt, an area that comprises Kwara, Niger, Kogi, Nassarawa, Benue, Plateau, Taraba and Adamawa states, as well as southern Bauchi, and southern Kaduna (HRW,2006:7).

Independence in 1960 marked a fresh beginning in all parts of the country. The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), led by Sardauna Ahmadu Bello, ruled the Northern Region (one of three regions, the others being Western and Eastern) was the dominant force in the coalition running the Nigerian federation. The first republic was characterized by squabbling and intense competition between regions [Falola et.al, 2008]. The north's wish was to enhance their influence relative to the more developed south and preserve their

religious and cultural identity, inherited from the caliphate era but disrupted by colonial rule. Experience has rightly shown that some people are willing to go to any length to prove a point especially when they are disgruntled or aggrieved [Oaikhena, 2011:215]  Thus, the Sardauna and the NPC aimed both to unify the peoples of the region as a single bloc that would maintain a dominant influence on national affairs and to restore the north religious heritage and cultural identity [Ostien, 2007].

Between July and October 1966, northern mobs killed thousands of southerners, mostly Igbos, across the region, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee back to safety in the south. Partly in reaction to these killings, the Igbo-dominated Eastern Region attempted to secede from Nigeria on 30th May 1967, declaring itself the Republic of Biafra. The federal government's efforts to prevent this led to civil war from 1967 to 1970. Though it was fought far away in the south east, it had long-term impacts on inter-group relations. In particular, many northern youth enlisted in the army, which expanded from 10,000 in 1967 to 250,000 in 1970. This reinforced the perception of the military as a means for maintaining the north's dominance in the federation [ICG, 2010;8]. However, many recruits and new officers were from the northern minority groups. Two decades later, many had become very senior officers. On retiring from service, many of them, searching for new relevance and no longer accepting Hausa-Fulani leadership, became leaders of their ethno-religious groups.  For most of the period of military rule, the federal government was dominated by northerners, whose historic strength in the army was seen as a way of compensating for their disadvantages in Western education. However, the population of the far north was well aware that it was seeing few of the benefits of federal power. The division of spoils created tensions, as many northern minority groups and Christian communities felt that they were losing out in the allocation of jobs to well-connected but less well-educated Hausa or Fulani. Other political disputes and clumsily implemented policies raised communal temperatures [ICG, 2010;3]. These often involved international issues, such as the 1986 decision for Nigeria to become a full member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) [Falola,2008:95-102].  This paper x-rays the dynamic relationship between the religious historical crisis in Nigeria and the struggle for sovereignty between the dominant religion and the emergence of the Boko Harm conflict.

*Boko Haram's Emergence and its Quest for an Islamic Nation*

The emergence of the Boko Haram religious conflict which started in June 26, 2009 and blew into a conflagration spreading into different parts of northern states, was perhaps one of the most well-coordinated mass-destruction of religious violence in Nigeria in recent times [Ukanah, 2011:249]. Boko Haram *(*Meaning *western education is sinful)* in the northeast (Maiduguri) part of Nigeria is believed to have the backing of other Islamic terrorist groups outside the country. The group whose official name is *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wai Jihad*, meaning *'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad'* was founded by one Mohammed Yusuf in 2001 and its aim was to overthrow the government and establish an Islamic state in Nigeria [www.Boko Haram.com]. An Islamic government according to Ayatollah Khomeini (who established an Islamic State in Iran in 1979 through a Revolution) "is the government of the law and God alone is the ruler and the legislator. He said that God's rule is effective among all the people and in the state itself, and that all individuals – the prophet, his successors and other people – should follow Islam, which descended through revelation, which God had explained through the Quran and through the words of His prophet, and has legislated for them"[Kenyi, 2002:106].

The result of this believe has led different Islamic sects in the north, to be in the forefront of a serial war against the state, orchestrating repeated gun and bomb attacks mostly targeted at government officials, security agents and adherents of the Christian faith, with possibility of fighting a holy war or *jihad.* Islamic Jihad raids started in the Mediterranean in the seventh century AD. A proto-typical Muslim naval *razzia* occurred in 846 when a fleet of Arab Jihadists arrived at the mouth of the Tiber, made their way to Rome, sacked the city, and carried away from the Basilica of St. Peter all of the gold and silver it contained [http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2009/]. The agitation for an Islamic state by the sect in Nigeria, is believed, can only be achieved through the instrumentality or the propagation of Jihad.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government of Nigeria has proscribed the sect in order to nip its activities in the bud. In a nationwide presidential broadcast on May 14, 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan officially announced the proscription of the sect after the group had been labeled as one of the terrorist organizations by the International community. The federal government went further to declare a state of emergency in

three states of the federation, namely, Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa states. The sect was reported to have been responsible for the deaths of over 3,000 people, the maiming of others and dislocation of hundreds of thousands, in a bid to Islamize the north [Gbade, 2013].

Extremism is often considered as antonym to compromise, which, depending on context, may be associated with concepts of balance and tolerance. A prominent scholar once observed that; "until the present day, politicians of the north, the religious scholars and modern Muslim intellectuals claim the legacy of Usman Dan Fodio for themselves in order to legitimize their political strategies and programs" [Schweitzer, 1961:20].

### *Internal Security Threat in Nigeria*

External security threat in Nigeria has been very minimal; internal security has remained a big challenge, especially as internal conflicts, including religious, political, ethnic and economic, have had a debilitating effect on the country's development since Nigerian's independence in 1960. Imobighe did not mince words when he said that at independence, Nigeria was a conglomerate of numerous ethnic groups devoid of any organic unity, instead of cultivating the feeling of national consciousness, this he said, remained the consistent ethnic groups which remained the primary units or entities with which the people of Nigeria were identified [2003].

Nigeria's unity depends on its internal Security, which is a very essential component of national security and its importance cannot be over emphasized. Therefore, capacity building in internal security is imperative to match its national aspirations and this can only be achieved by adopting technology in all fields of security management. The outlook is bright but it needs Government's on-going active management and fine tuning of policies, regulations, process and fiscal environment and on the other hand the industry to play an important role which is expected to provide cost effective solutions, as this will ensure effective project implementation and create a safer nation where conflict prevention and internal security could be justified.

However, much local-level conflict prevention and resolution does occur. Whereby some state authorities have done good work on community relations and security management, as vigilante groups and local policing is encouraged within various domains. Meanwhile, it is expected that security agencies are to

foster sustainability and demonstrate to both government and the public that security agents and managers in Nigeria have a new way of conducting their business towards the betterment and security of the society, in order to prevent conflict. Conflict according to Tonwe (2004) is the appearance of differences in opinions and interests. As such, conflict is neither good nor bad, but provides opportunities for good or bad results.

### *Religious Riot in the North*

The Maitatsine riot of December 18-19, 1980 was the first in the series of Islamic sect violence in northern Nigeria. In the course of Islamic historical development in Nigeria, all manner of Islamic scholars especially from North Africa, neighboring Cameroon and Chad Republic, introduced Islamic fundamentalism to Nigeria, which led to the development of several Islamic sects in Nigeria. In 1980 when the Maitasina riot occurred there were several Koranic Mallams (preachers) in Kano representing different sects. Each of these Islamic scholars preached fundamentalist Islamic religion and often denounced those in Nigeria who belonged to the Kadiriyya and Kabalu sects as pagans [Albert, 2004]. The multiple commands in the Qur'an to go and fight the unbelievers coupled with the early use of violent and widely successful conquests of a rapidly growing Islamic empire led to *jihad* taking a prominent role in Islam [Greta, 2010].

Religious intolerance in Nigeria is evident in the numerous terrorist activities in the immediate past. For example, some towns in the northern part of Nigeria experienced one form of violence or the other, notable religious conflicts include; Maitatsine riots in Bulumkutu (1982); Maitatsine riots in Jimeta (1984); Kano(Maitatsine-1980,1982, 1987, 1990, 1995) Maitatsine riots in Gombe (1985,1991); Kafanchan (1987); Tafawa Balewa (1991, 1995,2001); Zangon-Kataf (1992); Tiv-Jukun and Tiv-Kuteb (1992-93); Potiskum (1994, 2009) Kuteb-Chamba (1997-1998); Igbirra-Bassa (1986-2000); Moon-Eclipse crisis in Borno (1996); Kaduna (Maitatsine riots in Rigassa 1982, 1992, 2000) Tiv and Others in Nassarawa (2001); Jos (1994,2000, 2001-2003,2008, 2009,2010); Ikulu-Bajju (2001); Yelwa-Shandam (2002,2004); Mangu-Bokkos (1992-1995); Bukuru-Gyero (1997); Maiduguri (2006,2009) Iggah-Oyikwa (2002); Kano(2004); Numan (2004); Azare (2001); Bauchi (2010); Wukari (2010), [Egodi, 2010]. The result of mistrust and misconceptions and suspicion often created the conflict situations, which explodes into religious violence.

For the Muslim fanatics, the whole system of nation-states and their administration are simply un-Islamic and should be pulled-down and replaced with what they would call an 'Islamic State' (Albert, 1999).

Evidently, the majority of the *Muslim Ummah* practice sound religious ideologies, while the few extremists amongst them have often ignited the flame of religious conflicts across the country. The activities of this small percentage of Islamic fundamentalists often stepped-into any little potential conflict situation to unleash religious mayhem on Nigerians and the country at large. This wind of religious conflicts in Nigeria has become more recurrent in the North which is mainly dominated by the Hausa Muslims. This paper presents an opportunity for the government and its agencies to realize that religious extremism and terrorism act have plagued the north and could affect the entire country. This phenomenon has claimed lots of innocent lives and displaced lots of persons. It has also created an atmosphere of insecurity amongst the Christians living within the domain in northern Nigeria.

Muslims in northern Nigeria have always been suspicious of Christian activities in the North. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the first church in Kano was not established until 1911. But after its establishment, church activities were restricted to a particular area to avoid or reduce conflict between Christians and Muslims. Adagba *et al* (2012) referenced Ibrahim and Igbuzor, that the manifestation of religion crisis was as a result of military rule, failure of the state and its institutions, economic disempowerment, non-separation of state and religion, politics of exclusion, culture of patriarchy and gerontocracy and ignorance and poor political consciousness. Against this background it became pertinent for the researchers to focus attention on what led to terrorism and terrorist activities that breed violence under the guise of religion in northern Nigeria and advocate that the Islamic religion is a peaceful religion as laid-down by Prophet Mohammed. The research points out that peace building through inter-religious socialization and reshaping of the people's perception by the nation's peace guarantors should be encouraged.

In view of these the study set out to find out amongst others, if compromise has prevented the security agencies from functioning effectively; if there has been an Islamic coloration in northern Nigeria, i.e. are there plans to upstage Christianity in the north; and if there has been external influence to religious violence in northern Nigeria.

## OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The paper seek to find out if internal security has indeed been compromised in the fight against terrorism and why religious violence has become a yardstick to addressing issues in northern Nigeria. It also seeks to establish if there are external influences that could be encouraging religious or sectarian violence in the north, as any slight provocation leads to strenuous relationship between the Muslim and Christians living in the same community in the north. The burning of Churches, Mosques, killing, maiming and displacement of innocent citizens (Christians and Muslims) has become a daily occurrence in northern Nigeria. Nigeria is a secular state. Religion extremism should not be allowed to take root. Attacks on worship and learning places have continued unabated. This paper took a cursory look at the reasons why the religious sects vowed to declare a holy war or *jihad*, if government fails to adhere to their demands that *Western Education* should be abolished in the north, and that the country should be Islamize, before they (Islamist fanatics), stop the wanton killings and destruction of lives and properties.

## CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

**Boko Haham:** People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad, better known by its Hausa name Boko Haram, is a jihadist militant organization based in the northeast of Nigeria. It is an Islamist movement which strongly opposes man-made laws and modern science. Founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2001 [www.wikipedia].

**Terrorism** is described as a systematic use of terror, often violent, especially as a means of coercion [Angus, 2002]. In the international community, terrorism has no legally binding, criminal law definition. Common definitions of terrorism refers only to those violent acts which are intended to create fear (terror), which are perpetrated for a religious, political or, ideological goal; and deliberately targeted or disregard the safety of non-combatants (civilians). Some definitions now include acts of unlawful violence and war.

**Cross-Border Crimes** has to do with the illegal activities across the border of any country. The porous nature of border, continue to engender cross-border crime and instability in the sub-region of Africa, owing to the lack of an appropriate mechanism for monitoring movements and illegal activities across the borders.

**Internal Security** is the act of keeping peace within the borders of a sovereign state or other self-governing territories, generally by upholding the national law and defending against internal security threats. Responsibility for internal security may range from police to paramilitary forces, and in exceptional circumstances, the military itself.

**An Insurgency** is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion or armed conflict". Insurgency – sometimes called guerrilla warfare, present unique problems for the host government.

**Security Agencies** are bodies saddled with the responsibility for protection of life, properties, prevention of crimes, border patrol and human trafficking, etc.

**Islamic Radical Group** is said to be a movement that tolerates violence and would engage in terrorism with the aim of the elimination of modes of living that are inconsistent with Islam (including a Western sense of values), the overthrow of the secular government, and the establishment of a society that is based on Islamic tenets.

**FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS**

The framework of analysis for this research was hinged on the formation of Islamic Jihad theory, which is associated with just war or holy war. Romeijin-Stout (2010:19) posited that the word *jihad* has been associated with terrorism, radicals, and fringe groups in Muslim society bent on destroying everything Western, he added that Islamic scholarship of the word refers to an idea that when applied to violence closely parallels the Christian concepts of holy and just wars. The Christian concepts of just wars are usually fought for the restoration of peace and justice. Since peace was held in such high esteem it was important that other methods of resolving disputes be attempted before turning to the last resort of war.

According to Romeijin-Stout (2010:20), the Qur'an has essentially two distinct terms for military activity: *qital* and *jihad*. The meaning of *qital* is simply "fighting" while the meaning of *jihad* is significantly more complex. He quoted Abdulaziz Sachedina as saying that the most common literal definitions of *jihad* are "struggling," "striving," or "exerting oneself," followed by an Islamic texts akin to "in the path of God," giving us a definition of "striving in the path of God." Classically *jihad* was referred to a spiritual warfare.

Muslim concepts of *jihad,* and warfare more generally, were shaped by the cultures that came before the birth of the religion. Romeijin-Stout (2010:22), asserted that the pre-Islamic Arabian cultures unfortunately did not leave behind much information for modern scholars (other than some fragments of poetry), so most of what is known about them is derived from the writings of Islamic scholars some 150 to 200 years after the rise of Islam. While Firestone (1999:20) noted that, the lack of primary source evidence is a hindrance to scholars, but so is the characterization of the time period by the early Islamic scholars who labeled the era *jahiliyya*, which means "ignorance".

In addition, the just war according to Russell (1975; 3-4) was generally fought on more mundane grounds, for the sake of protecting a territory or righting a wrong, and usually under the authority of some secular and political figure in the name of a state. Any situation in which a legitimate civic movement is oppressed or human rights are abused or trampled in the name of religion must be avoided, as this could be termed terrorism or terrorist activities. According to Dycus *et al*, terrorism is general intended to intimidate or coerce a government, individual, or groups to modify their behaviour or policies (2002:563).

### Pre-Islamic Culture

Donner (1991:34), posited that the pre-Islamic culture consisted of nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes often centered on an extended family with a few more permanent settlements surrounding oases, most notable of which were Mecca and Medina. Scholars and leaders in the north had commonly characterize the state of relations between different groups as hostile, and even when no fighting was occurring a general state of war between tribes was assumed. Oaikhena asserted that poor listening has in no small way affected the progress of the northerners, as this had caused distortion and communication gap between the people and their leaders, which has led to pre-mature judgment on the part of leaders who adopted the no human approach in dealing with issues [2011:208]. Romaijin-Stout (2010) quoting Reuven Fireston, as he said that raiding in this time period was both an extremely common event and also a formative aspect of the culture, as it serves as a means for acquiring assets and redistributing wealth, with raiders generally focusing on capturing highly mobile assets like livestock or prisoners while generally avoiding bloodshed as much as possible. A Muslim fights with his wealth and his person 'in the way of God" for the sake of these values in which neither personal gain nor greed is a motive for him (Yamada 2007:18).

Established values in the pre-Islamic culture promoted traits that would aid in survival, including hospitality, generosity, strength, bravery, good judgment, refraining from harming non-combatants and women, and intense loyalty to one's kin and clan [Firestone,1991:30 and Donner, 1991:35-36]. As a part of loyalty to one's kin and clan, a doctrine of revenge also became important. In the instances where bloodshed did occur and a person was killed, it became a matter of honor, and almost obligatory, for a closely related person to take revenge against the killer or the killer's clan, sometimes even to the extent of starting a war [Firestone,1999:35]. In cases where war did break out, the tribes around Arabia established a set of rules which would later impact early Islam in very distinct ways (Romeijin-Stout 2010:21).

### *Rules for the Declaration of Jihad*

Evidence for the "lesser" or violent *jihad* is much more plentiful, especially in early Islamic texts. It is clear that the tradition developed a coherent set of rules for declaring a *jihad*, how to fight, who may be fought, treatment of prisoners, and other factors. Romeijin-Stout (2010) asserted that Muslims are instructed in the Qur'an (sword verses-Q.9:29 and 9:5) to "fight those who do not believe in Allah" and "who do not practice the religion of the truth," and to "slay the idolaters." While (ibnNaquib, 1994:603) asserted that it is clear that the aim of *jihad* is converting people to Islam as the caliphs are instructed to fight "all other people until they become Muslim," unless they are a People of the Book – meaning Christians, Jews, and in some cases Zoroastrians – in which case they are given three options. According to Romeijin-Stout (2010) in quoting Rudolph Peters (1996) he said that these options where passed down in a *hadith* and are as follows: "Summon them to become Muslims. If they agree, accept their conversion. In other case summon them to move from their territory to the Abode of the Emigrants [i.e. Medina], if they refuse that, let them know that then they are like the Muslim Bedouins and that they share only in the booty, when they fight together with the [other] Muslims. If they refuse conversion, then ask them to pay a poll-tax (*jizya*). If they agree, accept their submission. But if they refuse, then ask God for assistance and fight them. This *hadithi* summarizes that the goal in fighting a *jihad* was two-fold: conversions (in the case of all non-Muslims) or submission (but only for certain people).

**INTERNAL SECURITY COMPROMISE**

To compromise is to make a deal between different parties where each party gives up part of their demand. This assertion was maintained when the Director General, National Task Force on Illegal Importation of Light Weapons and Small Arms, Osita Okereke, alleged that the federal government, Nigerian Police Force and other security operatives are not supporting the task force in addressing the proliferation of arms in the country because "they are all compromised" [Sunrise Daily, 2013]. Gangs of poachers with machine guns can wipe out an entire village in one day, if there is state compromise of security. Egwu (2001) argued that several studies indicate that the state and its key institutions and functionaries are, partisan, biased and show preference in their actions in ethnic and religious conflict. While Preboye (2005:111) posited that, "military power is based on the control of the bureaucratic apparatus of the State". Consequently, conflicts are recurring and cyclical which abundantly indicates the failure of the state in conflict management.

Succinctly, in human relationships "compromise" is frequently said to be an agreement that no party is happy with. This is because the parties involved often feel that they either gave away too much or that they received too little [Global Knowledge 2008]. Imobighe (2003:53) citing T. Forrest asserted that the dominance of distributive demands of politics and policy, combined with personalization of state resources and their disbursement, as well as clientelism and corruption, create enormous injustice and inequality that generates primordial and class conflicts. Over a million Nigerians are labeled as non-indigenes in the place where they live, while an increasing number of people are unable to prove that they are indigenes to any state. Such rise results from the proliferation of persons with questionable characters. Smah (2008:65) believed that "the violation of laws with impunity by political actors and players created a fragile system that is ready to collapse at the perception of real or imagined injustice and deprivation".

Imobighe added in his argument that, human persons, whether they live in a mono-ethnic or a multi-ethnic society, must struggle for the basic necessities of life, which include their physiological needs, their security needs, as well as other needs such as recognition, identity and self-fulfillment or self-esteem [2003:21]. When emotions in men are unchecked, not only do they debase man they also lead to the infringement of other people's rights and the violation of moral laws. In furtherance to these Leon (1979)

quoted Lenin as he assumed that there would always be a certain small number of misfits, these number would not be so great or their crimes so evil as to require a permanent police force, instead Lenin expected that the law-abiding citizens would naturally discipline the people with uprising intentions [1979; 198-199].

## ISLAMIC RELIGION COLORATION IN THE FAR NORTH OF NIGERIA

There have been echoes of demand for a split of the Nigerian state, and these calls are becoming louder as the activities of the Muslim fundamentalist increases by the day. Christian fellowships in Nigeria, believes that the nation's Christian community has been the target of these Islamist sect, a development which has seen to the continuing killing and maiming of a large population of Christians and burning down of churches especially in the north-east region. The Sultan of Sokoto Sa'adu Abubakar, the spiritual leader of Nigerian Muslims, has called the sect "anti-Islamic" and, as reported by the website AllAfrica.com, "an embarrassment to Islam" [Oladeji et.al, 2011).

The group conducted its operations more or less peacefully during the first seven years of its existence. That changed in 2009 when the Nigerian government launched an investigation into the group's activities following reports that its members were arming themselves. Prior to that, the government reportedly repeatedly ignored warnings about the increasingly militant character of the organization. Ukanah (2011:271) revealed that there are plans by northern jihadist to upstage Christianity in order to expand Islamic kingdom in Nigeria.

Paradoxically, *jihad* is widely misunderstood, and often equated with arbitrary violence, holy war or with Al-Qaeda's fight against the West. While some harbour real hostility to the West, for others, criticizing the United States of America is really a way of expressing frustration with Nigeria's secular state and its multiple problems. This secularity in Nigeria has brought about western values which seem to be a threat to Islam. According to the Crisis Group (2009), Islamic Movement campaigns for an Islamic government in Nigeria and strict adherence to Islamic law, guided by the slogan, "Islam Only", dismisses the Nigerian state, its flag, national anthem and other symbols as expressions of thought. This must be shunned by all true Muslims. Perhaps this reality also explains the prime position why religious violence occupies Nigeria's security pyramid.

There is also constant apprehension that exposure to Western culture (for example through films) and more broadly Western values, often seen as "moral deviance". In other words, some are ready to embrace technological advancement and modernization, but on condition that those transformations are, achievable in an Islamic framework that excludes broader "Westernization". Leon [1979:154] in quoting Max posited that individuals are destined for freedom and creativity but had been prevented from developing completely because they were slaves to their basic needs. Indeed Islamic education and scholarship, which confers considerable status, is often associated with time spent at a centre of Islamic learning abroad. Among the predominant Muslim nations of Africa, Senegal stands out by its unique blend of Islam and modernity and the spirit of tolerance which defines the national culture. This is so despite the prevalence of social and religious conservatism and the widespread influence of the *mourides* in social and political life [Donal, 1962:37-46].

**EXTERNAL INFLUENCES PROMOTING SECTARIAN VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA**

Islamic fundamentalist is believed to be receiving financial and logistic support from a number of countries particularly those along Nigeria's usually-porous borders and those with high Islamic population. Beshel (2012) had reported that "experts have pointed out that the porous borders in Nigeria are contributing to the current security challenges in the country, resulting in unrestrained influx of illegal immigrants through the various routes". This assertion was further stressed in a confessional statement by a Boko Haram extremist, captured by the Nigerian military, as he confessed that members from Chad, Niger and Cameroon are actively participating in most of the attacks in the north [www.news24.com.nig]. This claim of foreign fighters indicate the growing influence of Boko Haram Islamic sect, which started out as a machete-wielding gang and now wages war with armored cars, rocket-propelled grenades and improvise explosive devices in its mission to force all of Nigerians, Africa's largest oil producer with a size population almost equal number of Christians and Muslims, to become an Islamic state. Thus, churches, mosques, shops, warehouses and hotels have been most frequently targeted. The choice is intended not only to destroy the buildings but also to deliver an unambiguous message about "who owns the land" [Crisis Group, 2000].

**NEED FOR EFFECTIVE BORDER PATROL**

Phyllis Schlafly (2001) did not mince words when he said that: "terrorists are foreigners and that terrorism threat is from illegal aliens who are allowed to live in our midst and this is a failure of the immigration laws and the immigration officials.  He added that the policy of opening borders for anyone to sneak into the country illegally or to remain illegally after entering legally must be exposed and terminated. This he said is the most important security precaution governments must take."  The porous borders of West Africa continue to engender cross-border crime and instability in the sub-region, owing to the lack of appropriate mechanism for monitoring movement and illegal activities across these borders. It was with regard to these that the Nigerian Immigration Services, recently in some states in Nigeria deported illegal immigrants. To buttress these assertion, the Vanguard Newspaper of July 30th 2013 reported that Port Harcourt Rivers State Command arrested and deported 106 illegal immigrants from Gabon, Ghana, Cameroon and Niger Republic [Egufe,2013:6].  Kaduna state command also arrested 49 illegal immigrants amongst them Chadian nationals. Gang leaders and business men and women behind some of these activities, form close associations with some border officials as well as high ranking government or political officials, bribing and corrupting them in the process [Lemine, 2006].  Some of these officials are thus overwhelmed by the situation and are compelled to become accomplices.  This makes it difficult for genuine border and security officials to report their superiors and make an impact in addressing the cross-border problems.  Meanwhile the Minister of Interior, Abba Moro revealed that the Federal Government has so far deported more than 22,000 illegal immigrants since the start of its war against acts of terrorism spearheaded by members of the Boko Haram sect [www.huhuonline.com].

**THE ADVENT OF RELIGIOSITY AND ITS IMPLICATION ON ETHNICITY IN THE NORTH**

Religion is a cover for or a surface aspect of deeper antagonisms and the factors causing and driving the conflicts, transcend it to include a complex mix of history, political, economic, ethnic and other factors." (ICG, 2010: 21). The Quran and the *Sunnah* has been the guide of Muslim political and moral activism throughout the centuries.  The example of how the Prophet Muhammad and his companions led their lives and developed the first Muslim community serves as a blueprint for an Islamically guided and socially just state and society.  The role of Islamic law in Muslim society has been and continues to be a central issue

for the community of believers, while the number of radical Islamists is assumed to be small compared with that of moderate believers. For the Muslims, Islam is not only a religion, but a way of life, which covers the entire range of daily activities. European colonialism replaced Muslim self-rule under Islamic Law, which had been in existence from the time of the Prophet Muhammad, by their European lords. The Sokoto Caliphate, formed in 1804-1808, is a reference point for many Muslims in the region. As West Africa's most powerful pre-colonial state in the north, it is a source of great pride. But for some, its defeat by the British in 1903 and subsequent dealings with colonial and post-colonial states meant the caliphate was tarnished with the corrupting influence of secular political power. The impact of colonial rule was paradoxical. While policies of indirect rule allowed traditional authorities, principally the Sultan of Sokoto, to continue to expand their power, which was also circumscribed by the British [ICG, 2010,12].

Undoubtedly, Nigeria, African's most populous country, has over 300 ethnic groups, which British rule deliberately kept disunited. The problems associated with this diversity are inherent in the multiplicity of ethnic groups forcibly brought together into colonial states. Colonial rule deliberately encouraged ethnic consciousness and competition, and did not create the conditions for tolerance. For example, in South Asia, the British divided the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan, giving portions of the Muslim-majority state of Kashmir to each of them. The conflicts that resulted from these actions have led to the deaths of millions in the communal warfare between Hindus and Muslims, while the civil war between East and West Pakistan led to the creation of Bangladesh, and conflicts in Kashmir over Indian rule persist to the present day. In the Middle East, the French created modern Lebanon from portions of Syria, and the British set the borders for Iraq and Kuwait and created a new entity called Jordan. They also created a new country called Israel, ousting non-Jewish locals and taking land once belonging to Christians and Muslims and surrendering it to a foreign Jewish authority. Such arbitrary borders led to ethnic, regional, and religious conflicts including the Lebanese Civil War between Christians and Muslims, the occupation of Lebanon by Syria, the Gulf War, which resulted from Saddam Hussein's claim to Kuwaiti territory, and the Israel-Palestinian conflict [www.IslamReligion.com]. In Nigeria for example the power being exercised and sustained is solely by three groups, these are the Hausa/Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the West and the Igbo in the East.

Therefore, the origins of the internal crisis in several northern states are sometimes traced to deep-seated inter-ethnic animosities and historical feuds, which the divide-and-rule policies of the various colonial powers did much to fuel and exacerbate. The question of group identity and ethnicity is of great significance to Nigeria history. The way problems and issues are constructed in social, economic and political contexts have fundamental consequences for how they are understood and addressed. This assertion was traced to a report credited to the Bornu State government, which states that, the State government has concluded arrangement to demolish twenty Churches and schools in the north-eastern state, belonging to Christians. The report further revealed that the state government of Bornu had dispatched a notice to the Christian Association of Nigeria, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and owners of farmlands in the areas to convey its intention to acquiring the structures for a 1000 Housing Units to be built [http://www.huhuonline.com].

Religious violence in Nigeria has continued unabated. It has become increasingly doubtful if the government is capable of dealing with the Boko Haram situation or whether it deals with fundamentalist with kid's gloves, as its double standard in handling these episodes more than erased the doubt. Taking a cue from the period between 2012 and 2013, there has been harvest of death, mostly in the north. These killings are often times targeted towards the Christian community, innocent civilians and security agents. Hereunder are some selected reports of attacks carried out by the sect, with dates:

| Date of Violence | Activities/Timeline of Incidents |
|---|---|
| January 5 – 6, 2012 | A series of assaults on Christian churches and businesses occurred in northeastern Nigeria. |
| January 20, 2012 | On 20 January after Friday prayers, a group of gunmen in police uniforms entered five police buildings and freed all the inmates. They proceeded to bomb the buildings, as well as two immigration offices and the local office of the State Security Service in Kano. They later drove around the city in cars and motorcycles, shooting pedestrians and battling with police. Amongst the dead was a television reporter Enenche Akogwu, shot while covering the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. On 23 January the government announced that the death toll had risen to 185 people, 150 of whom were civilians and at least 32 police officers, including 3 members of the secret police. |
| February, 8 2012 | Boko Haram claims responsibility for a suicide bombing at the army headquarters in Kaduna. |
| February, 16 2012 | Another prison break staged in central Nigeria; 119 prisoners were released, one Warden killed. |
| March, 8 2012 | During a British hostage rescue attempt to free Italian engineer Franco Lamolinara and Briton Christopher McManus, abducted in 2011 by a splinter group from Boko Haram, |

| | both hostages were killed. |
|---|---|
| May, 31 2012 | During a Joint Task Force raid on a Boko Haram den, it was reported that 5 sect members and a German hostage were killed. |
| June, 3 2012 | 15 church-goers were killed and several injured in a church bombing in Bauchi state. Boko Haram claimed responsibility through spokesperson Abu Qaqa |
| June, 17 2012 | Suicide bombers strike three churches in Kaduna State. At least 50 people were killed. 130 dead bodies were found in Plateau State. It was presumed that the people were killed by the sect. |
| October, 3 2012 | Around 25 to 46 people were massacred in the town of Mubi in Nigeria during a night-time raid by the sect. |
| March, 18 2013 | Kano Bus bombing: At least 22 killed and 65 injured, when a suicide car bomb exploded in Kano bus station. |
| May, 7 2013 | At least 55 killed and 105 inmates freed in coordinated attacks on army barracks, a prison and police post in Bama town. |
| July, 6 2013 | Yobe State school shooting: 42 people, mostly students, were killed in a school attack in northeast Nigeria. |
| July, 4 & 5 2013 | 3 Soldiers, a Policeman and 32 Boko Haram suspects killed. Another media Report said 12 soldiers and 3 Policemen were killed, at Bama and Mallam Fatori, a border town with Cameroon and Chad Republic, in Bornu state. |
| August, 11 2013 | Boko Haram attacked and killed 44 Muslim worshippers in a Mosque in Katagun Town, Bornu State while 25 persons were seriously injured. |
| September 2, 2013 | Boko Haram killed 26 civilian JTF in Mongulu, Maiduguri, Bornu State. |
| September 25, 2013 | Suspected Boko Haram members killed one Pastor, two Children and set the Church ablaze in Yobe state. |
| September 29, 2013 | Gunmen, suspected to be Boko Haram members, kill 40 students of College of Agriculture, Gujuba, Yobe State. |

*Source:* www.Wikipedia, www.ngrguardiannews.com and Ukanah (2011:327-329)

Succinctly, the above table clearly revealed that the activity of the sect is worrisome and unpleasant. The Boko Haram members are not willing to spare any part of the north in their quest to Islamize the north and take over the machineries of government through the proclamation of *Jihad*. Government should put in place maximum military response to the Boko Haram's relentless and senseless killing of Nigerians through bombing and gun attacks. This barbarism has festered because the government dithered; it still does not fully understand the evil ideology that underpins the terrorists' murderous adventures. The continued wave of violence and the wanton destructions of lives and property must be stopped by the federal government. These measures will protect our democracy, our national unity and our political stability. As a result, the federal government should strengthen its military operations in the country. Failing to do this will mean that the country will remain a basket case.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is impossible to impose simple analytical categories or classificatory schemes on the wide range of African crises and conflicts. Ethnic divisions, be they radical, religious, linguistic, or tribal, often coincide with political divisions. They are as diverse in terms of their causes and origins, as in their dynamics, consequences and mechanisms of resolution. Though superficially similar in terms of their internal origins, it is obvious that many of the conflicts also have external dimensions. Some that began as a simple argument rapidly transcended to state or national conflict or crises, as the idea to destroy and fight for a belief is deep rooted. Oaikhena *et al* posited that, people become attached to ideas over time through a social-political process of putting their ideas into positive or negative use [2013:244].

Perhaps the time has come for a more eclectic, multi-disciplinary and multi-perspective approach to the study of Nigerian problems, as the researchers are of the view that, this is one of the reasons why there have been calls for a sovereign national conference. The conference would be expected to address salient issues, including religiosity and ethnicity. Since there will always be conflict in the north, as long as Christians and Muslims cohabit, and also as a result of the intention by some religious sect to Islamize the country. Violence in northern Nigeria has flared up periodically over the last 30 years. Mainly in the form of urban riots, it has pitted Muslims against Christians and has seen confrontations between different Islamic sects. Although there have been some successes in conflict management in the last decade, the 2009 and 2013 troubles in Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Adamawa and Yobe states involving the radical Boko Haram sect shows that, violence still may flare up at any moment. If the situation were to deteriorate significantly, especially on Christian-Muslim lines, it could have serious repercussions for national cohesion in the build up to national elections in Nigeria by the year 2015.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ There should be a better management of public resources and even distribution of same. This will put an end to ethnic and religious identity.
- ✓ Civil society in the north should be empowered to be more proactive in governance and public decision making processes and more specifically in conflict management processes.

- Christian evangelical preachers need to be more careful of what they say and whom they support especially when they are in Islamic territory, as these could be misconstrued.

- Community based media organizations should facilitate the process of peace building and empower local Islamic groups through capacity and confidence-building.

- The National Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency with assistance from the Immigration Services should be funded appropriately to find a lasting solution to internal security breach, as enough Nigerians have been killed and properties worth billions of naira destroyed as a result of internal conflict.

- Military barracks should be built along the nations' boarders, to check illegal entry and cross-border crimes and activities especially those that have been identified as porous.

- Closer collaboration between the police and internal security agencies with regards to exchange of information, staff exchange programs, and organization of frequent coordination meetings, training courses, should be encouraged.

- True Muslims must shun the calls for religious violence or Jihad by radical Islamic sects. Nigeria still remained a secular state as religions intolerance and hostility will be dealt with by the security agencies.

- Finally, lessons should be learnt from the situation in Sudan, Senegal, Pakistan, Lebanon, Rwandan, to mention but a few, where religious and ethnic conflicts, have badly torn these countries apart.

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